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Response
D. Small Stogin
PATENT
11-502

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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Applicant : Ranganathan, et al.
Application No.: : 09/537,738
Filed : March 29, 2000
Title : INKING SYSTEM AND METHOD

Grp./Div. : 2861
Examiner : David Yockey

Docket No. : 12019-08/NEC

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RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
Commissioner for Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

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October 24, 2002

Commissioner:

This is a response to the Final Office Action mailed May 28, 2002. In that Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 21-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Preszler.

In the rejection of Claims 21-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), the Examiner stated that Preszler disclosed "a first coupling component (cover 22) of a duplex coupler" and a "complimentary second coupling component" thereof. However, Applicant respectfully submits that the Preszler reference neither discloses nor makes obvious the use of a duplex coupler.

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Rather, the Preszler reference merely discloses the use of the cover 22 which cooperates with a fitting 26 and a tube 18 to facilitate coupling of a replenisher bottle 10 to a tank 14.

“A sealing foil 36 is place across an opening 38 at the top of the neck 34” of the replenisher bottle 10 (column 3, lines 24 and 25). “The end of the replenisher tube 12 is beveled to a relatively narrow point 48 to puncture the foil 36 and push the foil 36 out of the way of the tube 12 during insertion of the replenisher tube 12 into the replenisher bottle 10 (Column 3, lines 6-60). Thus, the Preszler reference merely discloses the use of a puncturing tube 12 for puncturing a foil 36 so as to facilitate coupling of the replenisher bottle 10 to the tank 14.

Such puncture tube and foil do not define a duplex coupler. As stated in the subject Patent Application, “The first component of the duplex coupler, when separated from the second component and attached to a replaceable bottle of ink provides a sealed unit that is easily unsealed for the dispensing of ink by simply inserting the first component, with its attached bottle of ink, into the second component” (page 4, paragraph 3). The specification of the subject Patent Application further states that “the filling procedure from the bottle is readily terminated by unlocking the connection between the first and second components which seals both of the components and thus provides an efficient spill-proof technique . . .(page 5, paragraph 1). Thus, a duplex connector is capable of sealing and re-sealing

It is respectfully submitted that the puncture tube and foil coupler of the Preszler Patent does not define a duplex coupler because removal of the puncture tube from the foil does not result in resealing of the foil (thus not sealing both of the components of the present invention) and consequently does not provide an efficient spill proof technique as in the present invention.

Further, according to the specification of the subject Patent Application, “A poppet advantageously is reciprocally disposed in one component and acted upon by the other

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component to open a fluid passageway" (page 5, paragraph 3). No such poppet is disclosed in the Preszler reference. Thus, as defined in the specification of the subject Patent Application, a duplex coupler is a coupler which advantageously utilizes a poppet in order to seal the container being coupled in order to provide an efficient spill-proof technique while facilitating such coupling. The Preszler reference neither discloses nor makes obvious the use of such a duplex coupler.

Moreover, paragraph 1 of page 9 and paragraph 1 of page 10, paragraph 3 of page 12 describe in further detail the structure and operation of a duplex coupler according to the present invention, wherein a poppet is moved so as to facilitate fluid flow only when the coupling is mated and wherein the poppet seals the coupling and prevents fluid flow when the coupling is not mated. The Preszler does not disclose any such structure or function.

Rather, the Preszler reference is directed to solving an altogether different problem from leakage (which is addressed by the subject Application). The Preszler reference addresses the problem of preventing "male components from being mounted on incorrect female components" That is, the Preszler reference provides a key in system so as to assure that only the proper components are mated to each other, but does not address leakage of all such components. Indeed, no reference to a "duplex" coupler or any such structure or functionality appears to be found in the Preszler reference.

Claim 21 of the subject Patent Application recites "a first coupling component of a duplex coupler formed to the container"; independent claim 24 recites "a first coupling component of a duplex coupler formed to the container" and "a complimentary second coupling component of the duplex coupler formed to the reservoir"; and independent claim 27 recites "providing a container configured to hold ink, the container having a first coupling component of

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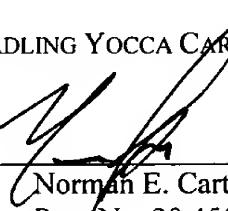
a duplex coupler formed thereto" and "providing a reservoir configured to receiving from the container the reservoir having a complimentary second coupling component of the duplex coupler formed thereto". The cited reference neither discloses nor makes obvious such use of a duplex coupler.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the subject Patent Application is in a condition for an immediate allowance. Reconsideration and an early allowance is, therefore, respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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